

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 and 14-25 are pending in this application. The claims have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Summary of Interview

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the interview conducted by the Examiner with Applicants' representative by telephone on January 6 and 8, 2004. Applicants' representative and the Examiner discussed the U-Haul reference (which is stated to be an archived version of the U-Haul website, www.U-Haul.com, as of January 25, 1998).

The Examiner verbally acknowledged that the U-Haul reference does not suggest or disclose, *inter alia*, expertise-based guidance relating trucks, vehicles, and towing accessories. The U-Haul reference discloses, at most, a short, standard list of towing accessory types generally available within the U-Haul rental system, the list including information indicating whether the towing accessories are suitable for front-wheel drive vehicles and, in some cases, a maximum towed-vehicle weight, but not their suitability for use with particular types of vehicles (e.g., identified by make and model), or the current availability of the towing accessories at specific rental locations.

No agreement was reached regarding the claims.

Rejection of the Claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

In the Office Action the Examiner has re-entered the rejections of the claims on grounds stated in the Office Action in Paper 11 in this application. Applicants respectfully continue to transverse, as explained below.

Claims 1, 4 – 9, and 17 - 25

Claim 1 and claims 4-9, each of which depends from claim 1, are drawn to a computer-based system comprising, among other things, memory in which is stored data relating to towing accessories that can be rented, towed vehicles with which the

towing accessories can be used, and expertise-based guidance relating to trucks and towing accessories; and programming for processing user input identifying vehicles to be towed to provide expertise-based guidance relating to towing accessories based at least in part on the one or more identified vehicles.

As stated by Applicants previously, and as discussed with the Examiner during the telephone interview of 6 and 8 January 2003, neither Danford-Klein *et al.* nor U-Haul disclose or suggest such systems, either alone or in combination. For example, neither Danford-Klein nor U-Haul disclose or suggest any systems comprising data sets relating to towing accessories that can be rented and towed vehicles with which the towing accessories can be used. U-Haul provides data relating to types of tow bars included generally in an inventory, without any data indicating whether specific tow bars are suitable for use with particular vehicles or vehicle types; and without providing assistance to the user in making a selection. Relating a vehicle and a tow bar is not the same as relating a weight and a tow bar. In order to select a tow bar, a user of the U-Haul is required to know or guess the weight of his vehicle, and take a chance as to whether a particular tow bar is suitable and/or available. The computer system provides no assistance to the user in selecting a towing accessory for a particular vehicle, without a necessity for the user to know anything more about the vehicle than its make and/or model. And Danford-Klein provides no suggestion of any system for filling this need using the system of U-Haul.

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references do not render their invention obvious. The type of processing provided by the claimed systems goes beyond what is disclosed or suggested by the cited references.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 4 – 9 and 17 - 25 are allowable for at least these same reasons, and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of those rejections also.

As stated in their Response dated 6 November 2002, Applicants respond on the merits without conceding that the U-Haul reference is complete and accurate, or that it

in fact constituted a publication or any other form of prior art on the date alleged.
Applicants reserve the right to challenge the authenticity of the reference.

Claim 2

Claim 2 recites a computer-based system comprising memory including data relating to towing accessories that can be rented and towed vehicles with which the towing accessories can be used, and programming responsive to a user input identifying a vehicle to be towed which accesses the memory and provides to the user computer over the communications network data indicating availability or not of a towed accessory for the identified vehicle to be towed.

None of the cited references discloses or suggests such a system. For example, as discussed above, neither Danford-Klein nor U-Haul nor any other cited reference discloses or suggests, systems which provide guidance in selecting towing accessories suitable for use with particular identified vehicles. Nor do any of the references provide data indicating the availability or unavailability at a given time or location of a towed accessory for the identified vehicle to be towed.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection, and allowance of the claim.

Claims 3 and 15

With respect to Claims 3 and 15, Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed functionality of using computer programs to provide multiple pick-up and drop-off locations for rental vehicles is not disclosed or suggested by the cited references. The cited location at page 9 of the U-Haul reference discloses a location finder adapted to find a single location nearest to the system user. This is not the same as providing multiple locations, and overlooks the advantages of providing multiple locations, for example, the convenience which may be provided to a user to whom a first location is closest, but which is for other reasons (e.g., traffic patterns, geography, political boundaries) less convenient to the user. There exists no motivation in any of the cited references for such an improvement.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections.

Claims 10 and 11

Claim 10 (from which claim 11 depends) recites a system comprising including, among other things, a program module for processing user inputs to determine and display to the user a set of closest locations associated with a departure location and a destination location specified by the user, to access and display directions from a user-specified address to the departure and destination locations, and to generate towing guide information corresponding to a user-specified vehicle to be towed by the rented truck.

None of these functions is disclosed or suggested by any of the cited references. As discussed above, the cited location at page 9 of the U-Haul reference discloses a location finder adapted to find a single location nearest to the system user. Nor do the cited reference provide any disclosure or suggestion of accessing and displaying directions to a plurality of locations.

Further, as discussed above, the cited references provide no towing guide information corresponding to user-specified vehicles to be towed by rented trucks.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 12 and 16

Claim 12 is directed to a system for aiding users to create and confirm reservations for truck rentals which includes among other features a web server for providing a plurality of web pages and for processing user inputs received from a user's computer operating a browser displaying the plurality of web pages which include at least one input field for receiving the user inputs, and a web page including data fields providing all information which the system provides to a user information necessary for a service contract in response either to user input data or data available from the system in which all data fields may be modified on the web page by the user without having to revert to another web page.

Claim 16 is drawn to a method for aiding users to create and confirm reservations for truck rentals comprising, inter alia, generating a reservation form on a web page which contains all reservation information provided in response to user input which may be changed by the user directly on the form on that web page without having to access another web page.

The Examiner has acknowledged that both Danford-Klein and U-Haul fail to disclose, either singly or in combination, a web page including data fields providing all information which the system provides to a user information necessary for a service contract in response either to user input data or data available from the system in which all data fields may be modified on the web page by the user without having to revert to another web page. Moreover, as previously indicated, neither Danford-Klein nor U-Haul provides any motivation for combination of the references to provide any of Applicants' claimed features.

Again, entire features of the claimed invention are lacking in the cited art, and no motivation exists for combination of those features which are taught. The reservation page taught by U-Haul is not the same as a contract page, and it is not analogous for relevant purposes. As is clear to anyone who has purchased goods or services over a computer network, a great deal more information, much of it secure, is required for the completion of a goods or services contract, and space on any single web page is limited. Neither U-Haul nor Danford-Klein (nor any other cited references) provides any guidance to solving the problems addressed by Applicants' invention, or suggests any solution.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections.

Claim 14

Claim 14 is drawn to a computer-based method for truck rentals which provides truck availability and pricing information, the improvement comprising the steps of providing towed vehicle identification data to the user, receiving a towed vehicle selection, determining whether an accessory is available for the particular selected vehicle, and informing the user of the result of the determination.

Neither Danford-Klein et al. nor U-Haul disclose or suggest such systems, either alone or in combination. Neither Danford-Klein nor U-Haul disclose or suggest any systems or methods for determining whether a suitable towing accessory is available for a particular, identified vehicle. Neither Danford-Klein or U-Haul discloses or suggests any method or system for eliciting information relating to a particular vehicle, much less using such information to identify a suitable towing accessory or determine whether such an accessory is available to the user.

For reasons already discussed, Applicants submit that the cited art does not render the claimed invention obvious, and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

CONCLUSION

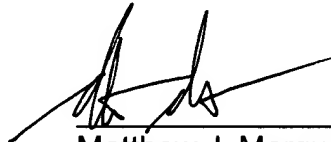
Applicants believe that they have fully responded to each of the concerns expressed by the Examiner in the Office Action, and that each of the pending claims is in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request allowance of the claims.

Applicants request that any questions concerning this matter be directed to the undersigned at (212) 895-2906.

I hereby certify that this paper, together with any document referred to as attached or enclosed, is being deposited this date with the U.S. Postal Service, with sufficient postage, as First-Class Mail addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Respectfully submitted,

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